

3.9 Alberta (AB)

Population: 4,025,074

Number of K-12 Schools: 2,152

Number of K-12 Students: 616,375

Number of K-12 Distance Education Programs: ~23

Number of K-12 Distance Education Students: ~75,000



K-12 Distance Programs

It is believed that approximately 23 school divisions in the province offer an assortment of online programs, catering mostly to students in their own geographic jurisdiction. Some manage students in other regions of the province, but at present there is only one single province-wide program (the Alberta Distance Learning Centre [ADLC]) that offers courses to any student in the province. Courses are provided in print, online and in blended formats in partnership with local schools and authorities. The ADLC also manages the Vista Virtual School, a school and not a provincial program, and ADLC partners with *Centre francophone d'éducation à distance* that provides distance education services to the province's Francophone students.

As the Ministry of Education does not collect distance education enrollment data, instead collecting data on students regardless of program delivery, there is no centralized data source to provide overall numbers for these district-based programs.

Governance and Regulation

At present, the School Act grants the Minister of Education the authority to make regulations with respect to public and private distance education programs. The Ministry has yet to exert that authority beyond outlining some specific requirements primarily related to the amount of required instructional time as a part of its their annual *Guide to Education*.

Over the past several years there have been several consultation initiatives with respect to distance, online and blended learning in the province. The most recent began in April 2012 when Alberta Education contracted Schmidt and Carbol Consulting Ltd. to conduct a review of distance education programs and services offered in the province and to provide recommendations for a provincial model for distance education delivery. To date the results of that review have not been made public.